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AF18027.

Incident No. 236 -- 4 Jan. 1949, 1400 Hours, Hickam Field, Territory of Hawaii.
An Air Force pilot saw an object which appeared to be a large round piece of flat cardboard the size of a T-6. It was white underneath and dark on top. It approached from 25 mile distance at 3000 ft and circled the area at 85. The object seemed to "blink" a "whitish reflection" regularly. It departed climbing at 25° angle.

AMC Opinion: The evidence does not lead to an explanation. It should be noted, however, that if the object were actually the size of a T-6 at 3000 feet a greater amount of detail should have been observed.

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Incident #102 -- air near Green River, Utah -- 18 February 1948.

It seems entirely probable that the object observed in this incident and in #103 was the Moracatur meteorite seen at an earlier part of its trajectory.

The direction of flight is stated as "southeast of Limon, Colorado." If this means that the object was heading southeast from Limon, it could not have been the Moractur fireball, since the direction of flight of that object was northeast; but if the statement merely means that the object was seen in the vicinity southeast of Limon, the location is consistent with the trajectory of that famous meteorite.

The time stated is approximate, and need not be given too much concern. Actually, of course, the sightings here would have had to be made almost simultaneously with those in Kansas. If the time had been reported as 1600 LST instead of 1500 (a typographical error, by any possibility?), then, allowing for the difference of one hour in time zones, the sightings would have been appropriately simultaneous.

In any event, whether this was the same or another object is not important. The description given -- particularly the statement "huge, multicolored ball of fire and dense cloud of smoke" -- answers closely to that of a fireball.

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Incident #103 -- air near Green River, Utah -- 18 February 1948

It seems probable that the object observed here was the Noractur meteorite seen at an earlier part of its trajectory. See report on incident #102 for discussion.

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Incident #104 -- Smyrna, Tennessee -- 7 March 1948

The object sighted here was undoubtedly the planet Venus. The stated position checks exactly (within allowable observational error) with the computed position of Venus. Description of color, speed, and setting time also all check closely.

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Incident #105 -- Belmont, North Carolina -- 8 March 1948

The speed of 600 MPH, the lack of an exhaust trail, and the reported "exactly horizontal course" make it extremely improbable that the object seen in this incident was a meteor. The "steady reflection which did not flicker" also argues against that possibility. Since the observer was a technical man, it does not seem likely that his observations can be considered subjective enough to fit them into an astronomical hypothesis.

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Incident #106-- Bakersfield, California -- 5 March 1948

While this report taken alone, with allowances made for subjective reporting, could be considered as applying to a disintegrating meteorite, the occurrence of at least three very similar incidents (see #107, 108, 109) at the same location, over a time interval of a few days, is sufficient to make this hypothesis completely untenable.

The description applies more closely to the "star shell" (a projectile which after disintegration emits a parachute to bring instruments safely to the ground), with which this investigator was familiar during the war, than to anything else.

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Incident #107 -- Bakersfield, California -- 8 March 1948

It is very unlikely that the objects observed here were of astronomical origin. See report on incident #106.

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Incident #108— Bakersfield, California -- 8 March 1948

It is extremely unlikely that this object was of astronomical origin. See report on incident #106.

Although the hour of observation is not stated in the witness's report of incident #107, it is possible, judging by the information which is given, that #107 and #108 refer to the same object or objects.

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Incident #109 — Bakersfield, California — 9 March 1948

It is extremely unlikely that the object cited in this incident was of astronomical origin. See report on incident #106.

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Incident #110 -- Baltimore, Maryland -- 23 March 1948

There appears to be nothing whatever astronomical about this incident, and, in view of the limited nature of the information given, nothing further can be said.

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Incident #111 -- Philippine Islands -- 1 April 1948

There appears to be nothing astronomical in this incident.

At a distance of 3 miles an object 20 feet long would subtend an angle of slightly more than 4 minutes of arc, and hence would be very near to the limit of the resolution of the eye. The object must have been very much larger, if the distance is correct, for the observer to discern its shape and its turtle back.

Since the object was seen by only one person, and since the description is contradictory, it seems to this investigator that not much weight can be given to the incident.

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Incident #113 -- Montgomery, Alabama -- 9 April 1948

The object cited in this incident answers to the description of an instrument-carrying balloon. In any case, there is nothing whatever in the report which would allow for an astronomical interpretation.

Attention can be called to the similarity of the description given here to that of incident #81.

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Incident #114 -- Fairbanks, Alaska -- 18 April 1948

There is nothing astronomical in this incident.

The description answers that of a maneuvering plane reflecting sunlight. One inconsistency is noted: report states, "Weather clear and visibility unrestricted," whereas weather sequence shows partial cloud coverage. This would not, of course, necessarily have prevented sun reflection from aircraft.

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Incident #116 -- Greenville, South Carolina -- 19 April 1948

There is nothing astronomical in this incident.

The description suggests that the objects observed were balloons or aircraft reflecting sunlight.

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Incident #116 — Moose Factory, Canada -- 11 March 1948

This incident can certainly be ascribed to the fall of a bright meteor, or fireball.

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Incident #117 -- Memphis, Tennessee -- 7 May 1948

It is unlikely that the objects viewed in this incident were meteors, but the possibility is not excluded.

It is unfortunate that some estimate of distance and of time in sight was not made. Objects might have been quite close, in which case large angular velocity would not imply great speed.

This investigator would like to emphasize again the need for better reporting of such incidents.

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Incident #118 -- Berlin, Germany -- 28 March 1948

The information given here is insufficient for a definite conclusion to be reached; the only possible astronomical explanation, which would be a slow-moving meteor, is very unlikely.

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Incident #119, 119a-b -- Asuncion, Paraguay -- 20 February 1948

While some of the reports of this incident are contradictory, the major portion support the hypothesis that the object observed was a slow-moving meteor or fireball. The speed and color concur in this. The fact that the object was seen over so wide an area implies that the observer who stated that it was only 1000 feet away was in error in his estimate.

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Incident #120 -- Vejle, Denmark -- c. 7 February 1948

Nothing is said here that militates against the object's having been a meteor. Information is very scanty.

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Incident #121 -- Cartersville, Georgia -- 9 January 1948

While the possibility of this object's being a meteor is not ruled out, it seems unlikely. Meteors are not known to be "light sky blue," nor to travel so slowly as indicated. However, report also states that color was an "intense blue," and, if speed were underestimated (or if object had a large radial velocity component -- coming largely "head-on"), it might possibly be interpreted as a fireball.

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Incident #122, a, b -- Holloman Air Force Base -- 5 April 1948

At the moment there appears to be no logical explanation for this incident.

There is nothing to indicate an astronomical origin of the object observed.

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Incident #123 -- Alton, Illinois -- 11 April 1948

There is nothing of astronomical character in this incident. If one considers Colonel Siegmund's statements apart from the considerably less reliable ones of other observers, it would seem that the object may really have been a bird.

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Incident #124 -- North Atlantic -- 18 April 1948

On the basis of the information given about this radar sighting, no astronomical explanation of the incident is at all likely. Could the sighting possibly refer to a flock of migrating birds?

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Incident #125 -- St. Louis, Missouri -- 2 May 1948

Information given here is inadequate to establish any category. The object observed was apparently nothing of an astronomical character.

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Incident #126 -- Anacostia, Naval Air Station -- 30 April 1948

There is nothing in the description of this incident to indicate astronomical origin of the object observed. It appears to have been a balloon.

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Incident #127 -- Yugoslav-Greek frontier -- 7 May 1948

Information given here is entirely too limited for any conclusions to be drawn. Possibly the object observed was a meteor.

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Incident #128 -- Hopson, Ohio -- 8 May 1948

Once again, the report given is entirely inadequate for a conclusion. However, astronomical origin of the object or objects observed seems very improbable.

The phenomenon described resembles the observation of an airplane beacon or search light reflecting against an overcast. This would certainly be periodic, appear phosphorescent, travel at great speed, and be oval in shape. Such interpretation would dismiss the occasional bursting and disintegrating as a subjective impression. -- However, weather conditions are not stated.

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Incident #129 -- Wilmington, North Carolina -- 31 May 1948

Evidence in this incident is contradictory, especially concerning tactics, but from the meager description and the fact that the object emitted smoke and travelled at a high speed, the possibility of its having been a meteor is not ruled out. Apparent oblong shape might have arisen from persistence of vision of a rapidly travelling bright object.

Is there a government testing field for guided missiles near by?

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Incident #130 -- Plevna, Montana -- 17 May 1948

If the report is to be taken at face value, then no astronomical explanation of this incident is possible.

However, in seeking even a remote logical explanation for the incident, the present investigator is impressed with the fact that on this very night, May 17, Venus was at its greatest brilliancy, with a magnitude of -4.2, or about 100 times brighter than a first magnitude star. It would have appeared that night as an intensely bright light in the northwest.

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Incident #131 -- Belleville, Illinois -- 20 June 1948

It appears improbable that this incident has an astronomical explanation. If the evidence is correct as given, the object could not have been a fireball. The zig zag course and the relatively slow speed do not fit in with the description of a large meteor. Lack of flare and train also tend to rule out this hypothesis.

The description answers that of a lighted balloon relatively close by.

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Incident #132 -- Oslo, Norway -- 12 December 1947

The object observed here answers the description of a fireball, and the probability that it actually was one is very great.

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Incident #133 -- Norway, Denmark, Sweden -- 20-26 February 1948

Information given here is too limited for any conclusions to be drawn. The stated heights, the occurrence at the same time each night, and their specific direction makes explanation of the objects as meteors unlikely. The green tails are also not characteristic of typical meteors, but would fit into a description of rockets or flares.

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Incident #134, 134a -- Monroe, Michigan -- 28 May 1948

There is no direct astronomical explanation for this incident.

This investigator wishes to call attention to the fact that the objects observed were seen at essentially the same level as the lower cloud stratum and that there was a high overcast. Could it be that these officers saw successive shafts of sunlight, through breaks in the high overcast, illuminating small portions of the lower cloud stratum? Apparent speed of the objects could then have been a combination of the relative velocity of the C-47 and the projected motion of the break in the overcast.

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Incident #135 -- Weaver, South Dakota -- between 15-20 August 1947

For the description of this incident as given, there is no astronomical explanation.

The statements of an apparently well-trained observer can scarcely be doubted, but no interpretation, either astronomical or otherwise, other than possible detached auroral streamers, suggests itself. The moon at the time was new and the night apparently very dark, the most favorable conditions for the observation of auroral phenomena.

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Incident #136, 136a -- S. Knoxville, Tennessee -- 30 June 1948

This incident answers well to the description of a typical fireball: color -- orange; apparent construction -- fire; exhaust -- "streamer of bluish color trailing"; manner of disappearance -- "over horizon"; and (in remarks) "streamer emitted sparks."

All of the above fit the typical phenomena associated with a night-time fireball.

One witness states that the object was in sight for three minutes and the other states for three seconds. The lower time estimate is clearly more in keeping with meteoric phenomena. It is also probably far more nearly accurate, since one is much more likely to grossly overestimate than underestimate intervals of time.

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Incident #137, 137a -- Chapel Hill, North Carolina -- 7 July 1948

This report refers solely to a sound phenomenon. Statements of the witnesses indicate specifically that no object was seen. The summary sheet given here seems to confuse the description of this incident with that of incident #138.

Fireballs and bright meteors are often known to emit sounds similar to the rolling of thunder. The information given in this report is so meager, however, that, while the sound referred to could have been meteoric, no decision can be made.

It seems more probable that actual aircraft were heard.

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Incident #138 -- Columbus, Ohio -- 8 July 1948

There is clearly nothing of astronomical character in this incident.

It is the present investigator's opinion that the objects were aircraft. The "bobbing up and down" can be explained as a "seeing" effect -- that is, distortion of the image by air currents.

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Incident #139 -- Osborn, Ohio -- 9 July 1948

There is no obvious astronomical explanation for this incident.

The present investigator was struck first by the fact that the description of the incident states, "... with about a quarter moon rising in the east-southeast." The quarter moon can never be seen in that position at 2147 hours (local time), for the quarter moon sets at approximately midnight. The moon at that date was not yet at the first quarter, and it set at Osborn at about 2300. The correct statement would be, "... with about a quarter moon setting in the west-northwest." This, oddly enough, is the quadrant of the sky in which the object was reported to be seen. In what direction, then, was the observer really looking?

Although the sky was reported as clear, could it possibly be that rapidly scudding clouds periodically obscured the setting moon -- a moon which, incidentally, does have a pale yellowish-white light?

Other possibilities that suggest themselves are detached auroral streamers or floodlights or searchlights playing on the sky.

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Incident #140, a -- Gahanna, Ohio -- 1 July 1948

The object sighted here was probably a bright, slow-moving meteor. It is described as a "bright yellow-white light," moving at a "terrific" rate of speed, and was in sight for two or three seconds.

This investigator is again struck by the reference to the ubiquitous moon. "Bright moonlight" was reported; at the stated hour of observation, the moon had not yet risen.

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Incident #141 -- Hecla, South Dakota -- 30 June 1948

The description given here obviously does not answer to that of a star, or of any other astronomical body.

In all probability the object was a cluster of balloons, carrying, perhaps, cosmic ray apparatus. This would account for the starlike appearance and the eventual breaking up into parts.

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Incident #142 -- Boise, Idaho

No details are given concerning this incident. Letter from investigator indicates that observer was not sufficiently reliable to warrant consideration of his report.

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Incident #143 -- Columbia, South Carolina

No details concerning this incident have been obtained.

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Incident #144 -- near Montgomery, Alabama -- 24 July 1948
144a, b -- near Blackstone, Virginia -- 24 July 1948

The famous "space ship" sighting reported in incident #144 should be compared with #108 and 208, and also with #144a and b, which together constitute a separate incident if facts are correct as given.

For #144, there is no astronomical explanation if we accept the report at face value. The sheer improbability of the facts as stated, particularly in the absence of any known aircraft in the vicinity, makes it necessary to see whether any other explanation, even though far fetched, can be considered. The two reliable pilots obviously saw something. If one extracts from their reports parts of the description -- "tremendous bursts of flame," "cigar-shaped," "disappeared into a cloud," "orange-red flame," "time in sight five to ten seconds" -- one sees that this much, at least, could be satisfied by a brilliant, slow-moving meteor. The orange-red flame is particularly suggestive. It is pertinent also, that the only passenger awake at the time the two pilots sighted the object gave a description that does not tally with that of a "space ship" but does agree with that of a meteor.

It will have to be left to the psychologists to tell us whether the immediate trail of a bright meteor could produce the subjective impression of a ship with lighted windows. Considering only the Chiles-Whitted sighting, the hypothesis seems very improbable. However, not included in the summary but mentioned in the

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voluminous collateral material is the report of a qualified Robins Air Base observer, who stated that he saw a cylindrical object trailing a red flash of fire, but did not discern any windows or a double deck; (admittedly, from the ground he would have had less opportunity to do so). The time of his observation is exactly one hour earlier, if both times are given in EST (as is stated). It is interesting to note, however, that Macon, Georgia, and Montgomery, Alabama, are both on the line of flight as described by the Montgomery observers.

If these two sightings refer to the same object, there are two possible interpretations. One is that the object was some type of aircraft, regardless of its bizarre nature. The distance between Macon and Montgomery is approximately 200 miles. From all reports the object was travelling definitely faster than 200 MPH, so would have covered the distance between the two points in much less time than that noted. (The schedule is, of course, correct for an ordinary aircraft.)

The other possible explanation is that the object was a fireball, in which case it would have covered the distance from Macon to Montgomery in a matter of a minute or two. If the Montgomery observers had been using daylight savings time (do regular

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commercial airlines connecting cities using daylight savings time operate on it?), then there would be no discrepancy in the time.

The conclusion seems to be this: If the difference in time is real, the object was some form of aircraft travelling at 200 MPH. If there is no time difference, the object must have been an extraordinary meteor. The observation from two such widely separated points is the focal point of the investigation -- if one assumes that the same object was observed in the two cases. That there were two separate objects can most likely be ruled out by the sheer improbability of more than one such extraordinary object being seen on the same night, travelling over the same course, exactly one hour apart.

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The object reported in incident #144a and 144b was very probably a meteor.

It should be noted that this object was travelling in the same direction as the one reported in #144, although separated by some 400 miles. It is not unusual for a fireball to be seen along a path several hundred miles long. There is a time discrepancy of 15 minutes between the observations, however; any connection between #144 and 144a-b (in considering the meteoric hypothesis) necessarily hinges on whether this time difference was real, or not.

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Incident #145 -- Fielding Lake -- 9 July 1948

The lack of any exhaust trail and/luminosity of eliminates an astronomical explanation for the objects reported here.

It seems more probable that they were distant aircraft flying in formation, or migrating birds.

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Incident #146 -- San Acacia Dam, New Mexico -- 17 July 1948

Lack of exhaust trails eliminates any possible astronomical explanation for this incident.

It seems more probable that the objects observed were a) balloons at a much lesser distance than that estimated, b) aircraft in formation, or c) birds.

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Incident #147 -- Springfield, Ohio -- 27 July 1948

The description of this incident, although meagor, is in agreement with the hypothesis that the object observed was a fireball. Thus, "bright red tail of fire," "travelled in straight line," "great height," and the short time in sight all increase the probability that it was a bright meteor. The fact that it was travelling north, at this time of night, implies that the meteor was crossing the orbit of the earth on its way toward the sun when the collision occurred.

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Incident #148 -- Springfield, Ohio -- 23 July 1948

The planet Venus seems to be the culprit in this incident. Venus attained its greatest brilliancy in the morning sky on July 31, and at approximately 0400 in the morning on July 28, it was a very brilliant object slightly to the north of east. The magnitude was -4.2, which makes it about 100 times brighter than a first magnitude star. Intermittent cloud coverage could easily explain the appearance and disappearance of the object, and as to the stated size, this can be dismissed as a purely subjective estimate. The evidence appears convincing to this investigator that the object observed was Venus.

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